

# Devotional Studies

## Your Spiritual Life: Zeal or Apathy?

Is there zeal for the things of God in your life? Or is there indifference toward spiritual things? Recently, I (Dallas Burdette) talked with an individual who informed me that he and his wife were not too much into this thing called “church.” This barefaced, or blatant, remark shocks the believer. Yet, this same attitude is true of many who profess faith in Jesus, even though they do not verbalize this outlook. The Church is secondary in the lives of scores of Christians who confess Jesus as Lord. They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (**2 Timothy 3:4**). They want to hold on to God with one hand and, at the same time, embrace the things of the world. God is placed on the back burner of one’s life; lack of concern for spiritual matters is paramount. The words of Paul to Titus are as true today as they were then. Listen to Paul as he bemoans the feelings of many on the Isle of Crete: “They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him” (**Titus 1:16**). Paul, in his farewell letter to Timothy, lamented the desertion of Demas from his walk with the Lord. His words still confront the actions of many Christians today: “Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me” (**2 Timothy 4:10**). John, too, bewailed the trend of many when he wrote:

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. <sup>17</sup> The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (**2 John 2:15-17**)

Moses is a classic example of one who chose God rather than the “pleasures of sin for a short time” (**Hebrews 11:24-25**). The author of Hebrews continues his remarks about Moses: “He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead for his reward” (**11:26**). Some pleasures are not sin, but, at the same time, one should not love the pleasures of life more than God. Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, addresses the divided heart this way: “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money” (**Matthew 6:24**). One could also say that one cannot serve both God and Pleasure. God and the things of His kingdom should be first in one’s life. Again, Jesus says, “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” (**6:32**).

It is time for self-examination. Have you examined your relationship to God recently? Paul, as he closes his second correspondence to the Corinthians, pleads with

them to “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course you fail the test?” (**2 Corinthians 13:5**). In Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians, he praises Timothy with words that should be true of every believer: “I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interest, not those of Jesus Christ” (**Philippians 2:20-21**). Are you looking out for the things of God’s kingdom? Everyone should have the mindset of the early Christians: “They devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (**Acts 2:42**). Are you devoted “to the fellowship” of God’s people? Do you regularly meet with the saints on Sunday? Or do you forsake the assembly in order to enjoy the pleasures of life for a season? The early Christians, in spite of persecution on their door-steps, were told: “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing” (**Hebrews 10:25**).

Countless Christians drift away because they do not stay in the Word. The caution of the author of Hebrews is still as applicable today as it was then: “We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away” (**2:1**). What is your custom about meeting with God’s fellowship on Sundays? Have you adopted the custom of Jesus? Pay attention to Luke as he editorializes the habits of Jesus concerning the Sabbath: “He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read” (**Luke 4:16**). Have you lost your spiritual fervor? Paul cautions Christians in Rome to “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord” (**Romans 12:11**). Have you lost your first love? To one of the seven churches of Asia, Jesus says, “Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love” (**Revelation 2:4**). Do you hold out the Word of Life? Do you shine like stars in the universe in your service to God? Since every individual believer lives in a depraved and crooked generation, he or she must, in the words of Paul to the Philippians: “shine like stars in the universe” as each believer holds out the word of life to a lost and dying world (**Philippians 2:16**).